



General Assembly

Fifty-ninth session

Official Records

Distr.: General

28 October 2004

English

Original: Russian

Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 1st meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 30 September 2004, at 11 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Kyaw Tint Swe. (Myanmar)

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04-52781 (E)



The meeting was called to order at 11.15 a.m.

Organization of work (A/C.4/59/1; A/C.4/59/L.1; A/C.4/59/INF/1)

Procedural questions

1. **The Chairman** drew attention to the recommendations concerning the work of the Main Committees, contained in the General Committee's first report (A/59/250). He noted in particular paragraphs 16, 19, 22, 23, 25, 26, 29, 30, 33 and 37 of the report, which related to the timetable, procedures for conducting and speaking at meetings, verbatim and summary records, resolutions, documentation and the programme budget.

2. At the previous session, the usage rate of the conference resources allocated to the Fourth Committee had surpassed the target figure of 80 per cent established by the Committee on Conferences. It was to be hoped that, at the current session, all delegations would make every effort to ensure that the Committee improved on that figure still further. His intention was to open meetings on time and to schedule them only when enough delegations had indicated their desire to speak. If a meeting was cancelled in good time, the resources allocated to service it could be redeployed for other meetings, whether connected to the Committee or not.

3. On the basis of paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 49/221 B, of 23 December 1994, he suggested that statements by members of the Committee during the general debate should not exceed 10 minutes, or 15 minutes in the case of those speaking on behalf of several delegations.

4. *It was so decided.*

5. **The Chairman** requested that the submission of draft resolutions should be lightened up, wherever possible. Where a draft was based on resolutions from previous years, the sponsors should indicate where changes had been made.

Programme of work, timetable and documentation

6. **The Chairman** drew attention to the letter dated 17 September 2004 addressed to him from the President of the General Assembly (A/C.4/59/1), his own note (A/C.4/59/L.1) and the note by the Secretariat (A/C.4/59/INF/1), which indicated the

agenda items allocated to the Committee, the programme of work, the timetable and the relevant documents.

7. In accordance with the annex to General Assembly resolution 58/316 of 1 July 2004, the agenda item entitled "Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples" (agenda item 20) would be allocated to the Fourth Committee every year and the item entitled "Assistance in mine action" (agenda item 22) every other year. In accordance with the General Assembly's decision on the report of the General Committee (A/59/250), the Fourth Committee had also been entrusted with programme 23 ("Public information") of the proposed strategic framework for the period 2006-2007 (A/59/6) for consideration and decision prior to its submission to the Fifth Committee. Moreover, in accordance with the annex to General Assembly resolution 58/316, the Committee would, at the end of the session, have to adopt a provisional programme of work for the next session. Meanwhile, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 56/509 of 8 July 2002, and 58/126 of 19 December 2003, among others, the Committee would, about three months before the next session, deal with agenda item 5 ("Election of the Officers of the Main Committees").

8. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the programme of work and the timetable contained in document A/C.4/59/L.1.

9. *It was so decided.*

Working Group of the Whole on Outer Space

10. **The Chairman** said that, as at previous sessions, the Committee would set up a working group of the whole to prepare draft resolutions for submission under agenda item 74 ("International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space") and to hold informal consultations on the draft resolution to be submitted to the plenary under agenda item 23 ("Review of the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space"). As far as he knew, the working group would be chaired by the Nigerian delegation. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee agreed to the establishment of the group.

11. *It was so decided.*

Agenda items relating to decolonization

12. **The Chairman** noted that, in approving its programme of work and timetable, the Committee had decided to hold one general debate covering all the agenda items relating to decolonization, namely items 20, 79, 80, 81 and 82. That decision would enable members of the Committee to speak on any or all of the agenda items at any meeting devoted to the topic. He also recalled that, since the Committee had been allocated agenda item 20 in its entirety, it would have to adopt decisions on all draft proposals to be submitted under that item.

Requests for hearings (aide-mémoire 1/04)

13. **The Chairman** drew attention to aide-mémoire 1/04, which had been circulated at the beginning of the meeting. It contained 23 requests for hearings on the questions of Gibraltar and Western Sahara under agenda item 20. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the requests should be circulated as Committee documents and that the hearings should be held at a subsequent meeting.

14. *It was so decided.*

15. **The Chairman** recalled that the Committee traditionally heard the representatives of Non-Self-Governing Territories on receipt of the relevant request. It should be established that such a request should be submitted by the highest elected representative of the Territory concerned.

16. *It was so decided.*

17. **The Chairman** said that requests had been submitted by the Chief Minister of Gibraltar, who wished to speak on the subject of Gibraltar, and by the representative of the Governor of the United States Virgin Islands, who wished to speak on agenda item 81, "Implementation of the Declaration of the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations". The hearings would be arranged.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.